



Arlington Historic District Commissions Final and Approved Minutes

July 09, 2020

8:00 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation

Commissioners Present: M. Audin, D. Baldwin, C. Barry, M. Bush, B. Cohen, B. Melofchik, S. Makowka, C. Tee

Commissioners Not Present: N. Aikenhead, A. Frank-Johnson, J. Worden

Guests: D. Green, C. Grinnell

- 1. AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm**
- 2. Approval of draft minutes from June 25, 2020 – continued to July 23, 2020 D. Baldwin moved to table minutes – seconded by M. Audin. Roll Call – all yes to continue**
- 3. Appointment of Alternate Commissioners: Jason/Gray – M. Bush, C. Barry, B. Cohen, S. Makowka; Mt. Gilboa/Crescent Hill: B. Cohen, B. Melofchik, S. Makowka, C. Tee**
- 4. Communications**
 - a. S. Makowka received a request that the AHDC accept applications for fiberglass gutters by another company with a very similar product to what the Commission typically approves. Discussion of intention to make both of those products able to be approved as a CONA item – S. Makowka will get back and let them know they are changing that procedure and they will be included in that envelope. Also, for now, the product needs to be appropriate and the new product meets the standards used by the Commission.
 - b. D. Baldwin received a call from someone representing house at 51 Academy and there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Recommended that they waste no time to come before the HDC and make a list of everything that needs to be done.
 - c. B. Cohen heard from J. Nyberg about Russell Terrace and he sent her plans and she will further review them and she personally is ok with just approving it as monitor but wanted to be sure HDC is willing to concur. Parking area with deck platform like what was there.

d. Michael Bush reported on 39 Russell about fences around the pool area. Only portion of interest was a fence between the house and the garage. If on street side of garage it might have needed a CONA and it is at the back of the garage so he feels it is OK for them to go ahead.

5. New Business

a. **Formal Hearing for 40 Irving Street (Green) for replacement stone wall and various other regrading projects (originally noticed for 6/25 meeting but continued to 7/9).** D. Green gave presentation – his house is at the corner of Irving and Ravine and they want to regrade and change a wall to deal with ugly cement walls on top of existing fieldstone wall and along Ravine street. Want to remove non-original cement wall everywhere. This will allow the lawn to be lowered and regraded to be flatter. The target grade will be at level of top landing of brick by the white stair. To do that they need a wall to replace the concrete wall along Ravine Street. Mason wants to do a stepped wall using fieldstone materials. Existing wall on Irving Street has big granite pieces in it and he is trying to match. The want multiple steps (option 1) because they want wall to die out eventually on right side of path – which he asserts a sloped wall won't allow; but have considered option 2 with fewer steps (2 segments) but left side will be higher to accommodate fewer steps. On right side of wall, there is a post and it has been cut off – he can put a new granite post in there to tie in the corner of the new wall. Option 3 would replace existing sloped wall with small fieldstone wall with no step. They haven't decided which wall and want approval for them to choose from the 3 presented.

Wall on Irving Street on right side of steps had sandstone cap under concrete and mason said it's almost impossible to get now so suggesting an uncapped wall on that side. Concrete cap is one other option if sandstone cap isn't recoverable. The final part of the proposed changes is the walk location on the Ravine St side – knee walls and concrete steps and brick being redone with vintage S&H paver brick with steps. S. Makowka asked if the same 3 steps to sidewalk would occur in all 3 options? Applicant responded, yes, but might have to continue the fieldstone wall inward a bit depending on the grade. Goal to have grade so that wall to left and right is easy to do transition to the steps and not have a retaining wall. Bottom step won't be same across because of the street slope. Small granite post to end on the right needed probably to match. Concrete wall against the driveway would disappear and just grass bordering the driveway. Goal to get something as close as possible to a level wall. M. Bush suggested if you had a short retaining wall in the lawn that extended in a circular fashion around the tree at the corner, it would give you a little bit of a terrace around the corner. M. Audin said maintaining the top of the wall is essentially level. Stone walls acted as a buffer between what sidewalk grade is doing and what yard needs to terminate at sidewalk. B. Cohen said just sloping it is more natural. B. Melofchik happened to notice property at 44 Gray Street has stepped wall so she just sent it to HDC – B. Cohen said that isn't a good example because it was a side yard wall and was not original to the house. M. Bush said if the grade died into the driveway that would make more sense.

The applicant asked if they can get approval to remove concrete and then come back once they know how it feels to determine the wall treatment. M. Bush has not heard any suggestions that put his hair on fire – Marshall seems to have best handle and it is his opinion that all of issues appear to be in discretion of monitor and he would be

willing to approve it that way. B. Cohen agreed. Removing concrete along Ravine and doing the grading is under the purview of the monitor and consistent with original certificate. S. Makowka feels the Commission has given permission to remove concrete and can allow the monitor to approve something sloped as appropriate. M. Audin suggested that the Applicant figure out how they want to regrade the lawn and where it shores up at sidewalk side and then take a look at what the wall might be – start with the grading and the wall is the connector so get the grading right before talking with a mason. Applicant's goal is to make lawn as flat as possible. So, no action needed – monitor will work with applicant to start work under the existing certificate.

- b. Continuation of Formal Hearing for 53 Westmoreland Ave. for enclosure of rear porch – continued to 7/23 per applicant.**
- c. Continuation of Formal Hearing for 187 Lowell Street (Grinnell) for new construction.** C. Grinnell continued presentation. M. Audin has reviewed recording from 2 weeks ago to be up to speed. So Charles, Carol, Marshall, Michael, Beth, Beth and Alison as alternate (S. Makowka recused himself). Had discussion last time about appropriateness for anything to be built on this site. C. Grinnell said he is unfamiliar with the 3-step process so apologized. Since then had C. Barry help him understand process. Commission is supposed to assess if parcel of land is appropriateness to District. He thinks his package was significantly informed from the work a number of years ago for the parcels. Step 1 historic significance was open space in front of 187 and spanning across to 191 Lowell. Trying to maintain open space as what's significant about this parcel. He feels everything needs to be pushed back on lot to preserve the open space resource in the District. This is the argument for saying this is a buildable lot. 187 was set on a platform in middle of large square lot – originally approved only house on left, not on right. Later after changes to house it was also approved for proposed house on right. M. Audin said he's trying to stick to step 1 and he's trying to not engage the step 3 consideration about placement. B. Cohen said she doesn't think anything has substantially changed from original approval but the nature of keeping that broad expanse coming around curve still stands. There's nothing inherently unbuildable about this lot. So Commission considered moving on to consideration of size, massing and placement. S. Makowka entertained anyone to make a motion to deny at this point to deny based solely on buildability of the site. Hearing no such motion, he moved onto step 2 which expanded the topics of discussion to include the size and massing of the proposed structure.

C. Grinnell showed prior approved plans that did not happen fully as presented. He explained that the parcel was sold in 2009 and he bought 187 and the vacant lot to the right while the barn to the left was built at 191 by J. Nyberg. Photos of 187 Lowell and nearby neighbors shown. Showing there is 40 feet between 175 and proposed new building and 29 feet to 187. Tried to keep scale and mass down to have 1 full floor below roof instead of 2 full floors. Kept ridge down and level of 1st floor at same point. Lot is narrow in back so front of structure is limited to 27 feet which is same dimension as barn proposed in this location 10 years ago. S. Makowka asked about difference between the 27-foot and 30-foot measurements on plan – 27 is the house and the 30 is the roof edge. S. Makowka asked about lot coverage? finished area is 2670 sq.- feet and the footprint of the structures 1st floor is 1430 sq. feet. S. Makowka asked how far back is front façade from corner of house to left? – 5 feet back was

answer to his best recollection. At rear corner of 187 of house it is 20 feet. Discussion about the numbers and setbacks with the Applicant confirming that nothing would encroach on the 10-foot setback on the lot line.

M. Audin complimented the applicant with the sensitivity he sees with the design. S. Makowka – referring to pg. 17 showing the stone wall to right of proposed structure – asked how tall that would be since it doesn't get hidden like garage door? Applicant responded that he is guessing around 5-6 feet but nothing restricts pulling the grade down other than being constrained by neighbor's existing driveway. M. Audin suggested bringing wall along driveway edge to the house and you could do a lot with re-grading the house down. He would move wall parallel (at 24') in front of house a foot or two closer to street and making sure you have that berm working for you. Existing stairs would probably stay – walkway or path should be incorporated. From front of porch 22' setback – set back substantially from what he is proposing. Applicant likes garage under – more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of that façade is hidden by the natural grade there and as you move back there the way the contours go the house would have to come up and as it comes up you lose advantage – balancing act – as moved back felt like needed to move up. Showing more visible cars from road wouldn't be desirable. The applicant agreed that there is room to move it back a bit more. The design might change – still talking about size and massing. B. Cohen doesn't feel it needs to go back as much because it was a barn design before – but setting it back a bit would be nice. They discussed setting back a little bit – but not raise it up at all.

Discussion about the intentions for the walkway. C. Barry said 2 things he thinks are very different that are typical of houses of neighborhood and era – 1) no clear front entrance and 2) having the parking underneath in the front. These concerns are more of a phase 3 detail but may be important to consider now. S. Makowka agree and noted that bump-out over garage doors is an unusual feature as well – but this is perhaps more a step 3 issue. D. Baldwin asked about the massing of the house – SF of proposed house is within 20sf of barn approved. The facing towards the street – the perception of mass is most important.

S. Makowka propose hearing be continued to 7/23 meeting which was agreed to by Applicant. M. Audin thanked applicant for thoroughness of applicant and thoughtfulness of what he is trying to propose.

6. Old Business

7. Review of projects

8. Meeting Adjourn – S. Makowka – moved to adjourn, seconded by M. Bush. Unanimous approval to adjourn after rollcall. 9:39pm